

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1, 4-8, and 10 and CANCEL claim 16 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A method for operating a network that includes wireless data transmission between a plurality of users, the network having at least two radio cells which at least partly overlap ~~and in which different channels are used for data transmission~~, and each radio cell having at least one base station, each base station using at least one unique communication channel for transmitting data to one or more of the plurality of users, the method comprising:

interconnecting the base stations of the at least two radio cells, respectively, via at least one common communication channel;

at predefined maximum time intervals, the base stations in the respective radio cells simultaneously transmit test signals during test cycles ~~and simultaneously process the test cycles of a given maximum duration~~, wherein, during each test cycle, each respective base station transmits a number of test signals at least equal to a number of unique communication channels being used by the respective base station and each base station having a radio cell that overlaps the radio cell of the respective base station; and

determining, within each respective radio-coupled user and based on the test signals, the unique communication channel with optimum transmission properties for that radio-coupled user.

2. (original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one user initiates the test cycles with messages recurring at the predefined maximum time intervals.

3. (original) A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein a user having a logic mastership in a network using an access procedure based on the master-slave principle is the user which initiates the test cycles.

4. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:
sending, from each of the base stations, at least one test signal during a test cycle on the unique communication channel assigned to the respective base station;
setting, within each of the radio-coupled users, all the unique communication channels for reception of the test signals during the test cycle; and
retaining, within each respective radio-coupled user, a unique communication channel with the best transmission properties for the transmission of data after the test cycle.

5. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein each of the base stations ~~each successively~~
transmit the test signals on each of the ~~different~~ unique communication channels during a test cycle; ~~and so that~~ no two base stations simultaneously transmit on the same unique communication channel.

6. (currently amended) A method as claimed in claim 5, further comprising:
receiving, within the radio-coupled users, the test signals during the test cycle on a unique communication channel that is fixed for the duration of the test cycle; and
determining which base station corresponds to the test signal on the unique communication channel received with the best transmission properties;
retaining, within each respective radio-coupled user, the respective unique communication channel of the determined base station as the one with the best transmission properties for the transmission of data after the test cycle.

7. (currently amended) A user device operable to communicate with various base stations within a communication network, wherein the user device is configured to determine a communication channel with the best transmission properties based on test signals simultaneously transmitted at predefined maximum time intervals by each of the base stations during test cycles ~~and wherein the base stations simultaneously process received data at predefined maximum time intervals having a given maximum duration, wherein, during each test cycle, the user device receives from each base station a number of test signals at least equal to a number of communication channels being used by the respective base station and each base station having a radio cell that overlaps a radio cell of the respective base station.~~

8. (currently amended) A communication system comprising:
a communication link operable to carry communication signals;
a plurality of base stations each corresponding to a respective cell and each connected to said communication link, each base station being operable to simultaneously transmit with other base stations test signals in each of a plurality of different channels during each test cycle ~~and being operable to simultaneously process the test cycles of a given maximum duration;~~
a plurality of user devices each operable to receive the test signals in each channel from each base station, said user devices each comprising a channel determiner operable to determine a channel corresponding to a test signal with the strongest signal level and a switch device operable to switch an interface of the user device to the determined channel, wherein each user device receives from each base station a number of test signals at least equal to a number of channels being used by the respective base station and each base station having a radio cell that overlaps a radio cell of the respective base station.

9. (original) A communication system as claimed in claim 8, wherein the communication link is a PROFIBUS communication link.

10. (currently amended) A mobile user device for use in a wireless network made up of a plurality of area cells, the device comprising:
a receiver operable to receive a plurality of test signals transmitted simultaneously from each of a plurality of base stations, the base stations corresponding, respectively, to each area cell, wherein each test signal comprises a plurality of test messages, each of which corresponds to a respective communication channel within the network, the user device receiving from each base station a number of test messages at least equal to a number of communication channels being used by the respective base station and each base station having a radio cell that overlaps a radio cell of the respective base station.

11. (original) A mobile user device as claimed in claim 10, wherein no two test messages corresponding to the same communication channel are transmitted at the same time.

12. (original) A mobile user device as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a channel discriminator operable to select a particular channel corresponding to a communication channel with an optimal signal level.

13. (original) A mobile user device as claimed in claim 10, wherein all of the test messages are transmitted during a test cycle having a fixed predetermined duration and wherein the test cycle is initiated by an initiation message generated by a master device connected to each base station through a communication link.

14. (original) A mobile user device as claimed in claim 12, wherein communication between the user device and at least two base stations is switched from one of the base stations to another of the base stations based on the channel selection made by the user device.

15. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
transmitting by filed devices measured values and control variables in an equidistant cycles to a programmable controller; and
inserting, by the programmable controller, a test cycle into each of the equidistant cycles.

16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the communication link is a PROFIBUS communication link and wherein the programmable controller controls the base stations and the filed devices connected to the programmable controller via the PROFIBUS communication link.